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FEDERAL JURY CONVICTS OKLAHOMA MAN IN FRAUD CASE

(EL PASO, TEXAS) United States Attorney Johnny Sutton announced today that a federal jury convicted 52-year-old **JAMES ECHOLS** formerly of Oklahoma City, Oklahoma, of scheming to steal over \$33,000 from an El Paso man.

In all, the jury convicted Echols of one mail fraud charge and one wire fraud charge. The jury found that in October 1997, Echols knowingly defrauded an investor in connection with a fraudulent business deal. Echols claimed to be seeking investors for a sports bar he was opening in Alabama. The sports bar did not exist, but Echols was able to obtain the money by faxing a fraudulent financial proposal and mailing a fraudulent \$50,000 promissory note to the investor.

The FBI initiated this investigation after receiving a complaint about Echols from a local El Paso businessman. Echols faces up to five years in federal prison. He remains out on bond pending sentencing scheduled for March 28, 2003.

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